

Introduction

As the cost of housing continues to rise, the number of households able to buy or rent decent and affordable housing continues to decline. Due, in part, to an increased awareness that the private sector cannot build affordable housing without some type of government assistance, the County Board of Supervisors has attempted to alleviate this dilemma by providing incentives and alternatives to builders of affordable housing projects.

The County of San Diego offers several incentive programs to developers and builders of affordable housing. Among these incentives are Density Bonus Programs.

This pamphlet is intended to give a brief description of these various incentive programs as well as references for further information, if needed.

Program Overview

The Density Bonus Program allows increases in the number of dwellings which may be built on a property. A developer who wishes to take advantage of a density bonus may be allowed to increase the total number of units that can be constructed in a new project over that otherwise allowed, provided that a certain percentage of the total number of the additional units are reserved for lower and low or moderate income households. The required number of affordable units varies according to the policy under which the proposed project falls. The County has four policies under which density bonuses can be utilized by the private sector.

Density Bonus Programs

Inclusionary Housing Policy (Policy I-75). As an incentive to provide affordable housing, this policy offers a 25% density bonus to residential projects in urban areas that reserve a minimum of 10% of their units for very low-income households or 20% of their units for low-income households. A few of the policy criteria follows:

- An Administrative Permit is required for all I-75 family projects.
- A developer will be allowed to receive a density bonus only after contractually agreeing to provide a specific percentage of the constructed units for persons or families in low, moderate, or lower income brackets for a 30-year term.
- The housing made available through this program can be either for rent or for sale, but reserved units must remain for rent throughout the full 30-year term.
- The density bonus applies only to housing developments with five or more dwelling units.
- The developer, pursuant to a contractual agreement, will be responsible for assuring that the reserved affordable bonus units are occupied by qualified households.
- Another I-75 provision offers a developer a 25% density bonus, if a builder reserves 50% of the total housing development for qualifying senior citizens. This State mandated program provides a density bonus for senior housing without regard to income.

Affordable Housing for the Elderly (Policy I-79). The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines for the implementation of Section 4120 of the San Diego County Zoning Ordinance to authorize density bonuses in designated areas for projects providing housing for very low-income elderly households. The Policy can be outlined as follows:

- Occupancy of all units developed under this policy must be limited to elderly households. A total 35% of the units are to be reserved for very low-income elderly households at affordable rental rates.
- A Major Use Permit is required for all I-79 projects.
- Within Current Urban Development Areas (CUDA) of the General Plan, up to 45 dwelling units per acre may be allowed in certain multifamily designated areas.
- The very low-income reserved units must be rental units while the remaining units can be rented or sold.
- The density bonus will depend on current conditions associated with the specific proposal and will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Mobilehome Park Density Bonus Program (Policy 3.8). The mobilehome density bonus option gives developers an alternative to the other types of projects which may receive an increase in the zoned density.

- This policy permits mobilehome park developments at a density of up to 8 dwelling units per acre in lower density areas both within and beyond established urban service areas.
- Projects falling under this policy may be approved pursuant to a Major Use Permit where suitable sites and facility adequacy can be demonstrated and overriding socioeconomic benefits (Policy I-102) that justify the density increase can be identified.

Housing for Lower Income Families (Policy I-88). This policy authorizes (through a Major Use Permit) developers to build low income housing at not more than 20 dwelling units per acre in areas permitted by the General Plan. The criteria follows:

- Occupancy of all dwelling units on the lot or building site is limited to lower-income families.
- All rents must be defined in a contractual agreement between the owner and the County of San Diego Department of Housing and Community Development.

Thus, the County allows this density exemption to projects within which 100% of the units are available to lower-income households eligible for housing assistance payments under Section 8 of the Housing Act of 1937 as added by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.



Summary and Contacts

This pamphlet is just a brief summary of the policies and programs the County of San Diego has created as an incentive to developers to provide affordable housing for those living in San Diego County with lower incomes. Governmental agencies, such as the County, realize the need for housing assistance and ultimately establish the policies that stimulate the provision of low-income affordable housing. It is the goal of the Department of Planning and Land Use and the Department of Housing and Community Development that the private sector in conjunction with the public sector can resolve the dilemma of housing shortages for the lower income residents of San Diego County. If there are any questions concerning the above mentioned programs or you would like additional information, please call or write to the Department listed below.

For information on land use policies contact:

**Department of
Planning and Land Use
5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B
San Diego, California 92123
(858) 694-3714**

For information on affordable housing policies contact:

**Department of
Housing and Community Development
3989 Ruffin Road
San Diego, California 92123
(858) 694-4885**



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COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO



DENSITY BONUS PROGRAMS

**(Development Incentives
For Affordable Housing)**

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and Community
Development
(858) 694-4885**